

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 687

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 5648

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: WALI KHAN WALKS OUT

REF: ISLAMABAD 5538

1. SUPREME COURT HEARING OF GOP'S CASE FOR DISSOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN JUNE 19 WHEN LEADER OF BANNED PARTY, WALI KHAN, ANNOUNCED HE DID NOT INTEND TO MAKE DEFENSE AND ABRUPTLY LEFT COURTROOM. BEFORE MAKING MOVE, WALI DELIVERED TO COURTROOM AUDIENCE, INCLUDING MANY FOLLOWERS, ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL SPEECH IN WHICH HE STATED THAT HE STOOD FOR CONSTITUTION, DEMOCRACY, AND RULE OF LAW. COUR ACTION IMMEDIATELY PRECIPITATING WALKOUT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SERIES OF DECISIONS IN WHICH BENCH REJECTED HIS CALL FOR RELEASE ON BAIL, APPEARANCE IN COURT WITH HIM OF OTHER JAILED NAP LEADERS (INCLUDING BALUCH), AND GREATER ASSISTANCE IN FINDING DEFENSE ATTORNEYS, BUT A NUMBER OF OUR SOURCES PRESENT AT THE HEARING CLAIM THERE GOOD EVIDENCE THAT MOVE HAD BEEN PLANNED IN ADVANCE.

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2. INITIAL SPECULATION HERE AS TO WHY WALI STAGED WALKOUT FAVORS IDEA THAT HE DESPAIRED OF NON-POLITICAL TRIAL AND THOUGHT DRAMATIC MOVE IN PRESENCE OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WOULD CREATE MAXIMUM IMPACT. THIS STRATEGY IS NOT UNLIKE OPPOSITION BOYCOTT OF PARLIAMENT AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES, AS IT TOO DEPRIVES OPPOSITION OF A CONTINUING FORUM FOR PUBLICLY ARGUING ITS CASE.

3. REUTERS CORRESPONDENT WHO SPOKE WITH SOME PARTICIPANTS TOLD US GOP LAWYER NOW BELIEVES TYWT IN ABSENCE OF DEFENSE PARTICIPATION COUR MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISION IN JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS. WE ARE SEEKING FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS IMPORTANT POSSIBILITY. MEANWHILE, GOP ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS GONE AHEAD WITH HIS PRESENTATION. QUICK READING OF LENGTHY MATERIAL CARRIED IN PRESS THIS MORNING SUGGESTS THAT THIS WILL COMPRISE SERIES OF CITATIONS DATING BACK TO BEGINNINGS OF SUBCONTINENTAL MUSLIM NATIONALIST MOVEMENT SEEKING TO PROVE THAT NAP AND ITS ANTECEDENTS HAVE CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED PAKISTAN CONCEPT.

LUPPI

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